

REMARKS

Claims 4-6 are all the claims pending in the application.

The Examiner maintains the rejection of claims 4-6 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Endo et al. (Endo) essentially for the reasons set forth in the previous Office Action, dated December 26, 2003. In reply to the arguments presented in the Response filed March 21, 2003, the Examiner alleges that in Endo "part 23a [which] is able to be tentatively retained when it is located between parts 15 and 17", and that "[t]he movement of part 23a to its final position ...is greater than the necessary movement of part 23a to be simply located between parts 15 and 17" (Office Action, page 2).

Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's prior art rejection.

As explained in Applicants' Response filed March 21, 2003, one of the requirements of the molding and retaining method as defined in Applicant's claims 4-6 is "moving relatively said at least one movable mold with respect to said another movable mold by a predetermined amount **greater than** an amount of movement necessary for tentatively retaining at least one of said parts to said other part" (see Applicants' independent claim 4).

In contradistinction to Applicants' claimed method, Endo discloses a method which executes **the exact** amount of movement necessary for retaining rear holder 3 on housing 2.

The Examiner now alleges that "as seen in Figures 1 and 2 [of Endo], part 23a is able to be tentatively retained when it is located between parts 15 and 17", and that therefore,

"movement of part 23 a to its final position in Figure 3 is greater than the necessary movement of part 23a to be simply located between parts 15 and 17" (Office Action, page 2).

However, this allegation, that at holder 3 is somehow retained on housing 2 when it is somewhere between the initial position shown in Endo's Figs. 1, 2 and the final position shown in Figs. 3, 4 is not supported by Endo's actual disclosure. In fact, Endo teaches that it is only at the completion of the movement of third upper mold 34 in the direction of arrow D (i.e., when mold 34 is in final position with respect to molds 34 and 31), that "the rear holder 3 is provisionally retained (that is, preset) on the housing 2, as shown in Fig.3" (*Id.*, col. 7, lines 13-31). The projections 17 shown in Endo's Figs. 3, 4 merely abut to the arms 23a, 23b for restricting the movement in the connector insertion direction (i.e., vertical direction in the figures) (see *Id.*, col. 7, lines 25-28). The retaining portions 26 of arms 23a,23b are retained with retaining projections 16, which requires exact amount of movement.

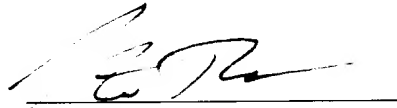
Therefore, Endo's actual disclosure teaches that third upper mold 34 slides on the upper surface of lower mold 31 toward second upper mold 33 in direction D by the exact amount necessary for rear holder 3 to be "provisionally retained (that is, preset)" on housing 2 as shown in Figs 3 and 4. Nowhere does Endo disclose, teach or suggest that, at some intermediate position of mold 34 with respect to molds 33 and 31, holder 3 will somehow be retained on housing 2. Likewise, nowhere does Endo disclose, teach or suggest that some additional movement of mold 34 with respect to either mold 33 or mold 31 is required after holder 3 is on housing 2 as shown in Figs. 3 and 4 (see *Id.*, col. 7, lines 32-36).

Accordingly, Applicants' independent claim 4, as well as its dependent claims 5 and 6 (which incorporate all the novel and unobvious features of their base claim) would not have been obvious from Endo at least for the reasons noted above.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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